

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/567,777
Response filed May 27, 2008
Reply to OA dated May 2, 2008

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are pending in this application. An amendment is proposed amending claims 1 and 2, and newly adding claim 4. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-4 will be pending. Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of the rejections are respectfully requested.

No new matter has been introduced by this Amendment. Support for the amendments to the claims is detailed below.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Baker (U.S. Patent No. 6,634,461) in view of Volk et al. (U.S. Patent No. 2,970,549) and further in view of Minamikawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,695,126). (Office action p. 2)

Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the proposed amendments to the claims.

In particular, claim 1 is amended to change the recitation "lift-unit" to --lift-body--, and the recitation regarding the "tire supporter driver" has been amended to a recitation regarding the --slider unit--. Support for the claim amendments may be found in the specification in FIG. 2 and at page 11, lines 8-26, which shows a slider unit 5.

Regarding claim 1, in Baker, the slot portion 34 and the pair of forks 36 are **integrally provided** as the carriage 32, and thus the pair of forks 36 cannot be moved from the slot portion 34. Therefore, there is **no distance between the slot portion 34 and the pair of forks 36**. On the other

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hand, in amended claim 1, “a slider unit which connects the lift-body and the tire supporter, mechanically controls a linear motion of the tire supporter **to change an interval between the lift-body and the tire supporter,**” and the lift body and the tire supporter of the present invention are **separately provided** and **the distance therebetween can be changed by the slider unit.** In other words, there is a slider unit between the lift body and the tire supporter in the present invention, whereas no mechanical component exists between the slot portion 34 and the pair of forks 36 in Baker.

The advantage of the present invention over Baker is that the present invention provides a vehicle transfer apparatus which can transfer various sizes of vehicles **by mechanically adjusting the interval between the lift-body and the tire supporter without manually moving the stanchions.** In most cases, the vehicle transfer apparatus according to the present invention is used in a factory assembly line where it increases a cost and consumes time if an operator moves the stanchion depending on sizes of vehicles.

Applicant noted this difference between the present invention and the cited references in the Amendment of November 9, 2007, in which the argument was made with regard to the previous recitation of the “tire supporter driver.” Applicant notes that in the final Office action, the Examiner did not respond to Applicant's previous arguments that the cited references do not disclose any element corresponding to the “tire supporter driver,” and, as argued above, Applicant submits that the cited references do not disclose the “slider unit” of the amended claims.

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Claim 2 has been amended to replace “an open-and-shut motion” with --linear motion--.
Support for the amendment to claim 2 may be found in the specification in FIGs. 2 and 3 and at page 14, lines 8-11.

In Volk, the catch levers 9 and 9a change between the operative position and the resting position **by rotational movement** as shown in FIGs. 2 and 3, and thus Volk does not teach or suggest “an arm driver which **controls a linear motion** of chucking arms,” as recited in amended claim 2.

Support for the recitation of newly added claim 4 that the stanchion is fixed on a floor may be found in FIG. 1 and the disclosure on page 9, lines 9-19. Support for the recitation that “the slider unit changes the position of the tire supporter between a tire support position and a passing position without moving the stanchion” may be found in FIG. 1 and the general disclosure of the specification regarding the change in position from the tire support position to the passing position.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicant's undersigned agent at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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